[Ans. Oct. 18-3]

C. E. M.

Lodiana, Feb.y 27th 1832.

My dear Brother,

Your letter of the 29th Sept. came to hand some time since, and was very welcome, as letters from America, and particularly from Princeton, always are. I must observe however that you erred, in taking it for granted that I had received all the news, from other sources, and that therefore it was not worth while for you to give me any. If you should ever be a missionary, (as I hope you may; if it be the Lords will to call you to that work,) you will find that you will want every envelope that makes its appearance from your far distant and beloved native land to give over to some news: & the more the better. However you did give me some, with reference to the venerable old Seminary, and for this I am much indebted to you. One item was of a character adapted to produce solicitude, & it served to prepare the way for the sad intelligence that soon followed; viz. of the departure of our dear & venerated Preceptor, Dr. Alexander. But while for those who mourn his departure the event is sad indeed, yet in itself considered, the transit of the aged and aspiring saint to the bliss on high, is a glorious event. How difficult to conceive, but how true & edifying, that the infirmities of age have been exchanged for immortal vigor.

At the time that you wrote, you mentioned that nothing special had as yet been developed as to the state of feeling among the students on the subject of missions, the New Session having but just commenced.

This is a most interesting topic, and one with reference to which I sh^d much like to receive information. Although the state of feeling in the church and in her institutions, with reference to the work of the world's evangelization, is, blessed be God, far other than it once was, yet there is equally little doubt, that we are still far short of the Gospel standard. Certainly there must be a serious moral defect in the character of those Christians, and especially of those candidates for the ministry, who are not truly and cordially willing to aid in making the Saviour known in Heathen lands, and who are prevented, by any measure, small or large, of reluctance in the matter, from a candid, cheerful examination of the question of personal duty. We know perfectly well that many Christians pass their lives in a very imperfect, remiss, heartless performance, or perhaps an entire neglect of one duty or another, because they have some secret prejudice or reluctance, of which they are perhaps themselves scarcely sensible, with reference to the claims of that duty. May it not be so with reference to the work of making known Christ among the Gentiles? I would fain use my feeble powers, dear brethren, to persuade every one of you to lay aside all carnal fear in this matter. May the question with the utmost simplicity before the Lord, individually and collectively, that we may

make his own selection from among you for this work. He will not send you all certainly, any more than he sent all of Gideon's army against the Midianites: but it is his right to chose, and to have the glad, willing service of each one on whom he calls.

But I must proceed to answer two or three questions which you have asked. 1. You inquire how the climate agrees with my health, and the health of those about me. In reply, I must observe that I have every reason for thankfulness with reference to my experience of the climate of India. This is my eleventh year in the country, and I believe I am about as well as I was when in the Theological Seminary: that is, not very robust, but in the enjoyment of a far larger average share than falls to the lot of many: very seldom laid aside from work by any ailment: not one day in three months probably, and sometimes not so much as that in a much longer period. The climate is trying, to the European and American constitution: of this there is no doubt: but it is equally certain, that a large proportion of those who are temperate in diet, regular in exercise, & avoid exposing themselves imprudently and unnecessarily to the heat of the sun, will be permitted a good long course of labour, and the enjoyment of a comfortable average of health. As to those about me, there has been some variety of experience, but I think upon the whole confirmatory of the opinion just expressed. Some have been less favoured than myself, and some even more so. Mr. Newton, the Senior Missionary of this Mission, now on his way to America, will I hope visit the seminary, and give you

much useful information, both on this point, & on other subjects of inquiry which may arise. It is now nearly fifteen years since he left America, and he had begun to feel the effects of the climate a good deal: but he will also tell you, that he was very seldom, for any considerable period, laid aside from active duty. I am sorry not to be able to add that my wife has been equally favoured with myself: though for the first nine years she too bore the climate extremely well, and only two years since she was looking the picture of health: but the Lord has seen fit to lay her low on the bed of sickness, & latterly she has been so seriously affected, as to make it seem very doubtful whether she would ever be raised up again. Her disease however is one which few perhaps would get by coming to India; it is an affection of the chest. Mr. Porter also, who has charge of our press, is troubled with a disorder of the throat; but that appears to be the prolongation of an attack he had in America, when he was there temporarily, two or three years ago, and commenced I believe with a severe cold. He considers the climate of Lodiana very favorable to his constitution: & has spoken of it as agreeing with him better than even his own country.

But you ask whether I do not think that many are worn down in constitution by study, before they leave home, & so are ill prepared to undergo the trials of another, & so different a climate. — Well, with some modification, I would give

this question an affirmative answer: but not just as it stands. I think, my dear brother, there are not many, though there doubtless are some, who injure themselves, and weaken their constitutions, by the actual amount of study they perform. But I am persuaded that by their sedentary habits, and neglect of exercise, with other imprudences which a little exercise of sound discretion would remedy, taken in connexion with a large proportion of time spent in study, many do injure their constitutions, very seriously: and this I suppose is virtually an affirmative answer to your question. I was so happy, when in the Seminary, as to be one of a number who used to make a round of some four or five miles in the morning before worship, entering the rotary just as the time was rising. Doubtless I am, through Divine goodness, reaping the benefit of those habits now.

There is another inquiry in your letter, which I must answer briefly, viz. "What are the principal grounds of encouragement in the field in which you are labouring?"

The truth is that we are left thus far, in this region, to a great lack of that encouragement which we chiefly desire, & for which we chiefly long & pray: viz. the outpouring of God's Spirit, and the turning of many, openly & fully, to the Lord.

In this respect our seedtime has been greatly prolonged: and the harvest has still stood aloof: which nevertheless we have been permitted, some years since, to realize very pleasing and satisfactory first-fruits. I shall note them, in the order in which they occur to me, a few of those things, which are, notwithstanding what has been mentioned, grounds of encouragement.

1. We have evidence that the Scriptures, and volumes of Tracts which we have distributed, have been very extensively, and by some, we hope many, attentively read. A young man, a native of Shiráz in Persia, came to us last year, who said that he had met with the Scriptures of the New Testament in Persia, long ago, the fruit no doubt of the faithful martyrs labours. Perhaps one of those distributed by himself, perhaps one of those that have in latter years passed up, through this region toward Persia. He is still with us, this I trust a true inquirer. An Officer in the army of the Maharája of Kashmir, a Sikh, came to us last year, & told us that he was a believer in Christ. He said that he & those about him had been reading our books for a dozen years past: and that many of them had become favorably inclined toward Christianity. A Sádh, from the country to the South of this, came to us some weeks since, & say that he and many of those about him believed in our Injil (Gospel) & that they had been reading it for years, and had become worshippers of "the true Father, Jesus". We could not well make out whether either he or

his neighbours had an intelligent, renovating faith: but he had evidently read the gospel, and knew a good deal of its contents. We are endeavouring now to find out something more about the matter. In the neighbourhood of Saharanpur as you may have heard, there is a village whose inhabitants generally have declared their renunciation of idolatry, and adherence to Christianity: though at the same time I am not aware that there is much evidence of the existence of vital piety among them. But these are signs of the times, & I am sure you will join with us in considering them highly encouraging.

2. We find among the people in the cities and villages around us a great willingness to hear the gospel. When we go on preaching tours, or send our native assistants, we find this the case: in some recent instances, this has been observed in a remarkable degree, much more than in former times.

3. Here, in our own more special field of labour, Lodiana, we do not find so much opposition as we did formerly. A number of old opposers have either gradually ceased coming, or have become friends, (without however embracing Christianity,) and the few new ones that have arisen in their stead, are not generally so difficult to deal with.

4. There is a great desire on the part of

the people to send their children to our schools. They manifest a great deal of confidence in us, though they know that we inculcate Christianity. Hence it may be concluded that their prejudices are in a measure softened. I might add other heads, and I might have dilated on those referred to: but there is not time at present. The mail leaves today, and I must hasten to close.

Reid, May 3rd 12

To the Committee for Foreign Missions
of the Presbyterian Church
Theological Seminary
Princeton
New Jersey

MAY 8 1812

Communicated this 8th. 21 h. and have added to the occasionally since. It is now March 6th.

May the Lord graciously pour out His Spirit on those preparing for the work of the ministry, & on all his servants: and may he make the Society ingaing, in whose name you have addressed me, & all the brethren in the Seminary, a society of earnest inquirers, saying "Lord, what wilt thou have me to